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ABSTRACT

In 1992, at the direction of the Superintendent of Schools of Leon County (Florida), the Multicultural Education Task Force was created. This task force commissioned, in the spring of 1994, a survey of district elementary and secondary school teachers focusing on their use of multicultural education strategies and their perceptions of the importance and level of implementation regarding these strategies. Five hundred district teachers were sent a questionnaire about their use of multicultural education approaches and their perceptions of these strategies, as well as barriers to implementing multicultural education and their needs for training. An in-depth analysis was conducted of the 218 surveys returned. Teachers who responded tended to use, to a limited extent, the identified multicultural education strategies, with elementary school teachers more likely to use them than others. No particular ethnic group stood out in use of these strategies, and teachers of all levels and all ethnic groups reported believing that multicultural education was worthwhile. Recommendations are made for implementing multicultural education in Leon County schools. (Contains three references.) (SLD)

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EVALUATION OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS FROM THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Evaluation of Multicultural Education in Schools from the Teachers' Perspective
American Education Research Association Annual Meeting, April 1995, San Francisco

Background and Objectives of the Research

In 1992, at the direction of the Superintendent of Leon County Schools in Tallahassee, Florida, a Multicultural Education Task Force was created. The Task Force was asked to address the growing need to develop a multicultural education awareness program to promote ethnic, racial, and religious acceptance and understanding among administrators, staff, students, parents, and members of the community. The Task Force developed a series of belief statements and a vision to guide its activities, along with the following operational definition for multicultural education:

> Multicultural Education is education that prepares students and encourages adults to live, learn, communicate, and work to achieve common goals in a culturally diverse world. This shall be done by fostering understanding, appreciation, and respect for people of other ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, language, and cultural backgrounds as well as commonalities.

The Task Force found that multicultural education encompasses many current issues in education: cultural diversity; cross-cultural communication; learning styles appropriate to diverse backgrounds; sensitivity to cultural differences; integration of multicultural education into the curriculum; bias-free, valid assessment measures; and teacher training.

The Multicultural Education Task Force therefore commissioned, in the spring of 1994, a survey of district elementary and secondary teachers focusing on their use of multicultural education strategies and their perceptions of the importance and level of implementation regarding these strategies. The study was conducted by the Program Monitoring and Evaluation Services Division with the assistance of a consultant. Specifically, the main purposes of the survey were: (a) to assess the extent to which teachers were incorporating multicultural strategies into the curriculum; (b) to compare the frequency of use in the 1993-94 school year with that of the previous year; (c) to identify the types of instructional strategies being used and how often they were being used; (d) to determine teachers' perceptions regarding the worth of these strategies; (e) to determine the availability of multicultural materials; (f) to identify training needs; and (g) to identify barriers to implementing multicultural education. In addition, the survey included demographic questions requesting information on ethnicity and on grade level and subject area taught. The resulting data were analyzed and reported to the Task Force. Among other findings were the teachers' desire for further training in multicultural education and the lack of appropriate materials.

Theoretical Perspective as Framework for the Survey

The five dimensions of multicultural education proposed by Banks (1993) were used in the evaluation for defining types of multicultural teaching. Other frameworks are found or

discussed in the literature, such as in Sleeter (1992) and Cordeiro et al (1994). It was decided to use Banks' dimensions, however, to establish the basis for the survey categories and questions on the use of multicultural education strategies. The dimensions were consistent as well with the beliefs expressed by the Task Force. They provided a conceptual structure for the survey, given that the Task Force had not reached consensus regarding the issues of interest. Each of these dimensions is summarized below along with the name of the survey category associated with it.

Content Integration. Teachers integrate cultural content into the school curriculum by focusing on heroes, holidays, celebrations, and information from a variety of cultural and ethnic groups. Teachers tend to use this approach more in social studies, the language arts, and home economics than into math and science. *Category 3: Use of Examples and Information to facilitate Learning of the Regular Curriculum.*

Knowledge Construction Process. Teachers help students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Students are also given the opportunity to recognize how biases within a discipline influence the way knowledge is constructed within it. *Category 4: Use of Lessons to Help Students Recognize the Interpretations of Events, Situations, and Conflicts are Influenced by Cultural and Ethnic Perspectives.*

An Empowering School Culture. Teachers use a variety of strategies to promote gender, racial, and social-class equity. *Category 5: Use of Specific Strategies Designed to Help Students Develop Positive Racial and Ethnic Attitudes.*

Equity Pedagogy. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles appropriate to learning styles of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups. *Category 6: Use of Specific Instructional Strategies Appropriate for the Learning Styles of Cultural and Ethnic Groups.*

Two other categories were: *Category 1: Use of Persons of Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Groups as Resources for My Class(es)* and *Category 2: Use of Cultural Events and Representatives to Help Students Recognize the Contributions of Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Groups*. The remainder of the questionnaire dealt with issues of materials and training needs, barriers, and demography.

Population and Sample

Five hundred teachers in the Leon County School District were sent a questionnaire regarding their use of multicultural education strategies and their perceptions of the worth and level of implementation of these strategies. The teachers were also asked to identify barriers

to implementing multicultural education and their training needs in multicultural education. The random sample of teachers to whom the survey was sent included 397 (79.4%) Whites and 103 (20.6%) Non-Whites. The district teacher population consisted of 1,399 (76.2%) Whites and 435 (23.7%) Non-whites. An in-depth analysis was conducted using the 218 surveys returned.

Responses

About half of the respondents were teaching at the elementary level. Just under one third of the group were high school teachers, one fifth taught in middle school, and finally about six percent taught adults. Among the 210 teachers who identified themselves ethnically, about 83 percent identified themselves as White Non-Hispanic and almost 14 percent as members of one of the other three racial/ethnic groups. Almost three-fourths of the latter were Black Non-Hispanic; the remainder were Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian.

Analysis

This teacher survey had both closed-ended and open-ended items. The structured responses were analyzed by cross-tabulation (of each of the two perspectives by each of the two stratifying factors), using chi square statistics to assess the significance of the distributions. Interpretation of closed-ended items was made by first identifying the proportion of all teachers who responded by selecting the most "desirable" category (e.g., frequently, worthwhile, etc). In interpreting the stratified samples, comparisons were made of the proportions of teachers at each level (e.g., elementary, Minority) of the demographic variable who responded by selecting the "desirable" category.

The open-ended items were coded qualitatively by theme. Categories were created as they emerged from the wide range of responses provided by respondents. The most frequently identified categories were reported.

Results

The teachers who responded to the survey tended to use, to a limited extent, the identified multicultural strategies. Elementary teachers used the strategies significantly more than those at other grade levels. No particular ethnic group stood out in use of the strategies, as both Minorities and Whites reported using them. Overall, however, teachers at all levels and of all ethnic groups reported believing these strategies are worthwhile and strongly expressed the need for more information about them.

Respondents felt constrained in implementing multicultural education by lack of resources, time, training, and by students' attitudes. They generally felt a need for appropriate training in understanding multicultural issues and how to provide quality multicultural education.

Findings

11. Use of Persons of Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Groups as Resources for My Class(es)

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Eleven percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with a larger proportion of Minorities than Whites (by 13.1%) and of teachers at elementary, middle, and high school levels than at the adult level using it frequently. Between 62 and 65 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with larger proportions of the White group (by 17.5%) and elementary teachers reporting use. Eighty-four to 86 percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with larger proportions of the White group (by 6.7%) and elementary teachers reporting a perception of worth. Overall, well over half of the teachers (62.4%) indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED STRATEGIES IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES. (N=142)

- content without reference to speakers or resource persons (16.9%)
  - (e.g., case numbers 35, 47, 54, 59, 150, 174, 180, 191, 193, 197, 202)
- speakers or demonstrations (no specifics about content or characteristics) (12.7%)
- unrelated or unclear response (11.3%)
  - (e.g., case numbers 3, 8, 18, 23, 36, 37, 38, 44, 84, 95, 101, 132, 143, 148, 192, 198, 204)

I2. Use of Cultural Events (Holidays, Concerts, etc.) and Representatives to Help Students Recognize The Contributions of Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Groups

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Thirteen percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with a larger proportion of Whites than of Minorities (by 3.4%) and of elementary teachers than those at other levels reporting frequent use. Sixty-six to 67 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with a larger proportion of the White group (by 20%) and of elementary teachers reporting use. Eighty-eight to 89 percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with a larger proportion of the White group (by 2.6%) and elementary teachers reporting a perception of worth. Overall, over half of the teachers (57.5%) indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED STRATEGIES IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES. (N=160)

- cultural holidays & celebrations (e.g., Advent, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas around the World, Cinco de Mayo, Day of the Dead, Chinese New Year, US Thanksgiving & American Indians) (28.8%)
- Black History (e.g., Black History Month, Assembly, M.L.K. speech) (15.0%)
- guest speakers, attendance at other functions with speakers or exhibits (e.g., Harambee) (13.1%)

I3. Use of Examples and Information to Facilitate Learning of the Regular Curricula

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with a larger proportion of Whites than Minorities (by 4.1%) and of middle school teachers than those at other levels reporting frequent use. Fifty-nine to 61 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with a larger proportion of the White group (by 4.7%) and elementary teachers reporting use. Eight-two to 83 percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with a larger proportion of the White group (by 7.1%) and middle school teachers reporting a perception of worth. Overall, well over half of the teachers (61.5%) indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED STRATEGIES IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE LIST SOME OF THEM HERE. (N=112)

- presentations of examples from various cultures or use of multicultural theme for discussion & use in, for example, reading, writing, math, science, technology, social studies, geography, art; incorporation of cultures into themes (33.9%)
- study of famous persons, including women, for example, scientists, Nobel prize winners, philosophers, leaders (14.3%)
- songs, games, dance, music, art, realia, language, etc. of other cultures (11.6%)
- ethnic literature, folktales (9.8%)

I4. Use of Lessons to Help Students Recognize that Interpretations of Events, Situations, and Conflicts Are Influenced by Cultural and Ethnic Perspectives

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Twenty-four percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with a larger proportion of Minorities than Whites (by 6.7%) and high school teachers reporting frequent use. Fifty-five to 56 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with about the same proportion of Minorities and Whites but a larger proportion of elementary teachers reporting use. Seventy-six to 77 percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with a larger proportion of middle school and elementary teachers and Minorities (by 2.5%) reporting a perception of worth. Overall, nearly two thirds (63.9%) of the teachers indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED ANY LESSONS IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE LIST SOME OF THEM HERE. (N=84)

- miscellaneous comments (e.g., no planned lessons) (19.0%)
  (e.g., case numbers 81, 86, 90, 108, 120, 143, 145, 155, 157, 161, 173, 196, 197, 208, 216)
- current events (e.g., Olympics), news coverage (e.g., CNN) (16.7%)
- historic events & consequences (e.g., civil war, global conflicts, civil rights movement) (16.7%)
- discussion of beliefs & feelings of various cultures (13.1%)

I5. Use of Specific Strategies Designed to Help Students Develop Positive Racial and Ethnic Attitudes

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Fifty-two percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with more of the White group than the Minority group (by 11.5%) and elementary teachers reporting frequent use. Seventy-seven to 78 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with a larger proportion of the Minorities (by 2.7%) and the elementary teachers reporting use. Ninety percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with a larger proportion of the Whites (by 5.8%) and elementary teachers reporting a perception of worth. Overall, about two thirds (65.2%) of the teachers indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED STRATEGIES IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE LIST SOME OF THEM HERE. (N=95)

- role-play, simulations, adventures, cooperative activities, conflict mediation, exercises to build respect & trust, problem solving, leadership (20.0%)
- miscellaneous comments (20.0%)

- (e.g., case numbers 43, 75, 80, 86, 89, 95, 114, 119, 131, 143, 153, 155, 169, 173, 182, 187, 188, 216)
- mini-lessons, personal examples, on attitude, peer counseling, guidance in class, avoiding fights, using role models as example, guest speakers, behavior modification (12.6%)
- literature, art, music, foreign language study (11.6%)
- class discussions (e.g., on multiracial contributions worldwide, cultural differences & similarities, about positive attitudes of people who are different) (10.5%)

I6. Use of Specific Instructional Strategies Appropriate for the Learning Styles of Cultural & Ethnic Groups

A.B.D.E. USE, WORTH, AND INFORMATION NEED

Forty-eight percent of teachers reported using this strategy frequently this year, with a larger proportion of Minorities than Whites (by 8.8%) and elementary teachers reporting frequent use. Sixty-two to 63 percent of respondents used this strategy last year, with more Minorities (by 8%) and elementary teachers reporting use. Seventy-eight to 79 percent of teachers think that this strategy is worthwhile, with a larger proportion of the Whites (by 2.7%) and elementary teachers reporting a perception of worth. Overall, over two thirds (69.2%) of teachers indicated that they needed more information about such strategies.

C. IF YOU HAVE USED STRATEGIES IN THIS CATEGORY DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS, PLEASE LIST SOME OF THEM HERE. (N=71)

- unrelated or unclear response (33.8%)
  - (e.g., case numbers 79, 86, 110, 112, , 122, 123, 124, 126, 127, 143, 145, 164, 166, 196)
- information gathering (e.g, I talk to parents to determine cultural influences on learning; multiple intelligence testing, ask the students & listen to them, accommodate as needed, consistent & frequent input from students) (15.5%)

II. Please answer the following questions about Multicultural Materials.

A. ACCESS (N=198)

Less than half of the teachers (43.9%) felt that they have access to adequate multicultural materials for use in their classroom.

B. PLEASE LIST SOME OF THE MULTICULTURAL MATERIALS BY CATEGORY THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO.

(1) BOOKS/PRINTED MATERIALS (N=97)

- books (e.g., multicultural books, books & kits containing stories I can spotlight, books from other countries & cultures, books on famous Native & Black Americans, books by ethnic authors) (34.0%)
- specific titles (e.g., *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold, *Underground Railroad*) (17.5%)

(2) CD/VIDEO/SOFTWARE (N=62)

- specific titles (e.g., *Glory*, *Molly's Pilgrim*) (21.0%)
- videos (e.g., how to incorporate multicultural awareness into preschool classroom, travel) (19.4%)
- movies (e.g., 16 mm at Leon County Media Center), filmstrips (17.7%)

C. PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIFIC MATERIALS THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO BUT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. (N=71)

- multimedia (e.g, VCR, TV, video cassettes, laserdiscs, Cds, software, slides, tapes) (25.4%)
- non-specific comments (e.g., Would love more materials! Suggestions please; more on all areas; need ideas; list of materials) (16.9%)
- books & other printed materials (e.g., on games from around the world, children's books, displays, posters, pamphlets) (15.5%)

III. Please answer the following questions about Training in Multicultural Education.

A.B. TRAINING RECEIVED. BENEFICIAL?

Approximately half of the teachers (54.2%) have had training in multicultural education, although only 18.7 percent have had such training this year. About 46 percent of respondents report never having received any multicultural education training. Nearly 46 percent of teachers felt that the training was somewhat beneficial for improving multicultural education in their classroom.

C. PLEASE LIST ANY ADDITIONAL AREAS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN WHICH YOU FEEL YOU NEED MORE TRAINING. (N=53)

- all (20.8%)
- understanding different cultures & my expectations, strategies, & learning styles; sensitivity regarding cultures; how to teach about cultures of students in the class (18.9%)
- unrelated or unclear response (17.0%)
  - (e.g., case numbers 8, 20, 25, 176, 177)
- none (15.1%)

IV. **Briefly, what do you see as the most significant barrier(s) for you in implementing multicultural education? (N=184)**

- lack of resources, money (e.g., for materials); lack of access to what is available (24.5%)
- lack of time; workload too heavy (17.9%)
- lack of training; limited perspective (e.g., understanding of other cultures, I don't know what multicultural education is; broader perspective of cultural diversity than Black/White or handicap issues only; need to seek similarities not just differences) (17.4%)
- unrelated or unclear response & miscellaneous comments (e.g., I teach high school math; more experience; mostly not appropriate for math or science; hard to incorporate into science curriculum; subject; media--TV keeps it stirred up.) (12.0%)
- intolerance [emphasis original] toward other cultures, values, & contributions by Black students; students' limited receptivity toward others; lack of motivation among students; unwillingness of multicultural students to participate in study of their cultures presented by other members; parents' & students' lack of perceived need to understand multicultural issues (8.7%)

V. **Please answer the following demographic information.**

C. **IF YOU TEACH GRADE 6 OR ABOVE, PLEASE LIST THE SUBJECT AREA(S) YOU TEACH. (N=128)**

- miscellaneous (CBI, business education, child care, vocational, exploratory, alternative education, ISS, ESE/gifted, GED, peer counseling, learning strategies, A. Jr. Reserve Training Corps, AFROTC, DOP self-contained, drafting [voc], computer applications, ISP or ISD [illegible], cosmetology, technology education) (21.9%)
- English, language arts/skills, reading (17.2%)
- math, algebra I & II (14.8%)
- science (13.3%)

Unsolicited Comments

VB. ETHNICITY

- US American
- human
- German, British
- See? Here you are dividing us again.
- Not important!!

REGARDING SURVEY OR SUBJECT IN GENERAL

case numbers 13, 33, 36, 51, 52, 59, 60, 139, 140, 182

Recommendations

- Multicultural education is more than just a one-time, simple "solution." As such, and to respond to the needs discussed above, adequate resources, including provision for time, should be allocated to the implementation and improvement of multicultural education, in accord with district goals for quality of educational services.

- A special effort should be made to encourage elementary teachers in their already impressive efforts at using multicultural education strategies, despite constraints, as well as to educate teachers at other levels in the importance and benefits of multicultural education.

- Appropriate training should be undertaken in a systematic, thorough, and ongoing manner to improve conditions of multicultural education.

- Evaluation of multicultural education should be conducted systematically and continuously in order to support implementation of multicultural education and inservice training for multicultural education, and to assist with its continual improvement.

- Concurrent to teacher education and support, it is recommended to carefully develop a plan to educate district personnel at all levels, families, and the community at large to understand the nature, benefits, and implications of multicultural education and its complexity, beyond the limits of narrow stereotypes and sporadic "feel good" activities.

Educational and Scientific Importance of the Study

This study, being commissioned by a public Task Force composed of interested members of the community, produced specific findings and focused recommendations. These were presented to the Task Force and other members of the public in attendance. The audience indicated extreme interest in the findings and expressed a desire to follow the research with further pursuit of salient questions. For example, it was decided that the issue of training should be examined, the community should be better educated through a variety of means (e.g., community fora, media coverage of Task Force activities, etc.), and further study should be done on the question of student perceptions of multicultural education, which was cited as a major barrier to its implementation. Thus the research was found to be utilitarian, addressing real issues of great concern to both educators and the community, and a spur to further research.

Secondly, from a scholarly perspective, this evaluation triggered questions about research of multicultural education. How the questions are framed, what terminology is used, and how the teachers in the sample perceive the questionnaire, including its role in itself as a help or a hindrance to their own work. It was found that although the open-ended questions were challenging and time-consuming to analyze, as are qualitative data typically, they revealed at a deeper level, the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge of the respondents in a manner the closed-ended questions could not have done. The research therefore contributed, in a concrete and desirable way, to our knowledge and understanding of teachers' own use, knowledge, and understanding of multicultural education.

Utilization and Impact of the Study

Several topics for discussion, focusing on utilization of evaluation, emerge from this study.

1. Motivation for the study
2. Choice of theoretical framework for instrument development
3. Usefulness of the framework for guiding the survey
4. Utilization: "Is there life after the study?"

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